

**Memorandum of the Meeting
Regular Study Session/Meeting
Twenty-Sixth Town Council of Highland
Monday, March 02, 2009**

The regular session of the Twenty-Sixth Town Council of the Town of Highland was convened at the regular place, the Highland Municipal, 3333 Ridge Road, Highland, Indiana, in the plenary meeting chambers on **Monday, March 02, 2009** at the regular time of 7:00 o'clock p.m.

Silent Roll Call: Councilors Bernie Zemen, Konnie Kuiper, Brian Novak, Mark Herak and Dan Vassar were present. The Clerk-Treasurer Michael W. Griffin was present to memorialize the proceedings. A quorum was attained.

Also present: Dennis Cobb, P.E. of First Group Engineers; Ed Dabrowski of the Park and Recreation Board; Mark Roorda, of the Town Board of Metropolitan Police Commissioners; John Bach, Public Works Director; Rhett L. Tauber, Town Attorney; and Officer Erich Swisher, President of the Highland Fraternal Order of Police were present.

Sergeant Michael O'Donnell; Corporal Chris Balbo; Officer Richard Hoffman were also present.

Hon. Frank J. Mrvan, North Township Trustee was also present.

General Substance of Matters Discussed

1. The Town Council discussed with Dennis Cobb, P.E. of First Group Engineers, the status and progress related to the Cline Avenue Improvement Project, with a northern terminus at Ridge Road and a Southern terminus at 45th Avenue. Mr. Cobb discussed the concerns about costs for the project and ways and means to finance the project. Mr. Cobb discussed his inclusion of an adjoining pavement line for adding a bike trail as a component which enhanced the funding sources. Some councilors expressed some concern about the placement of a bike path on a street with type of traffic as cline avenue experiences.

The discussion noted the changes requested by the Town of Griffith, a partner in the project, seeking some additional sanitary sewer infrastructure.

The discussion included the general stormwater drainage and the existing storm water system aligned with the Cline Avenue project and whether or not any special storm water infrastructure should be added in the design. It was noted that the project is scheduled for letting in December 2009 with construction to begin in 2010.

2. The Town Council, Officer Erich Swisher, President of the Highland Fraternal Order of Police which was recognized as the exclusive representative of the law enforcement officers of the Highland Metropolitan Police Department pursuant to IC 36-8-22, presented his written memorandum dated January 19, 2009, requesting a wage increase, increased longevity or both. He further noted that his executive committee met with Councilors Brian Novak and Bernie Zemen to discuss the wishes for the F.O.P. for its members. The discussion included the possibility of adding additional vacation time as well.

Officer Swisher also noted his belief that the City of Crown Point and Hammond have provided some support to retirees with the group health insurance premium and suggested that this would be a welcome benefit.

Councilor Zemen suggested that he would support no budget for 2010 without a raise included. The Council President suggested he favored trying to provide for raises in the 2010

budget cycle as well. Owing to a question posed by Officer Rick Hoffman, who inquired about the uses of MVH proceeds, the Council discussed Indiana's law in which up to 10% of the MVH fund may be used for public safety or police services.

The officers departed at this time.

3. The Town Attorney and the Town Council discussed an agreement between the Civil Town and the School Town adopted in August of 1992, to exchange or transfer property particularly involving the transfer of the former Civil Defense facility the School Town. A recent review noted that an error in the legal descriptions, mistakenly omitted the proper legal description of the civil defense facility. The discussion noted that there is not doubt as to the intention of the agreement and the parties. In fact, it was noted that the School Town has occupied and used the Civil Defense facility since the approval of the agreement.

It was noted that the School Town intended to raze the current building and construct a parking lot. Councilor Herak expressed reservation and opposition to the plans to construct a parking lot on Kennedy Avenue. It was noted that the Town Council would take the steps to correct the omission and perfect the transfer as intended at the Town Council meeting of Monday, March 9, 2009.

The Town Attorney departed at this time.

4. The Town Council discussed with the Township Trustee Mr. Mrvan his request to consider the adoption of a resolution supporting Township government. At a previous meeting, Councilor Zemen presented a sample resolution which originated with the East Chicago City Council opposing the elimination of Township government. The discussion included a presentation by Mr. Mrvan on the merits of township government. Mr. Mrvan offered a status report of the current legislation being considered in the Indiana General Assembly. Mr. Mrvan also offered a description of the services that Township provides for residents in North Township. Mr. Mrvan estimated that Highland residents represent a significant percentage of the constituents served. Mr. Mrvan also discussed his reservations about the assumption by the County Government of the functions now performed by the Township government. Mr. Mrvan opined his belief that this may not be a time to "tinker" with government forms that offer temporary assistance during the current difficult economic period. Mr. Mrvan noted that the City Council of Hammond has passed a resolution in support of Township Government.
5. The Town Council and Mr. Jim Roumbos discussed the prospect of engaging Mr. Roumbos as a grant writer/coordinator. Mr. Roumbos presented several informational binders to the Council and the Clerk-Treasurer from which Mr. Roumbos discussed the import of engaging a grant writer to apply for resources provided in the current Federal Stimulus (The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009) initiative to fund ready public projects rebuilding infrastructure and public assets. Mr. Roumbos presented his understanding of the effects of the tax caps and how bond financing in some cases can extract from operating revenues. Mr. Roumbos further noted that grants are included as a component in the recently adopted Stimulus plan and may be a desirable alternative financing source. The binder also had information on the proposed scope of work.

Mr. Roumbos asserted that any grant writer/ coordinator should be engaged as a full-time position. The discussion included whether or not alternative forms of compensation could be employed, either at an hourly basis or based upon some percentage of the grant amount that may be awarded. Mr. Roumbos suggested that he preferred a full-time engagement in which the grant writer would work with the full-time department heads in the coordination, identification and application for grants.

The discussion included whether or not there exists a significant supply of grants that would be applicable to the needs of the Town. The discussion included the prospects of funding a new police station and funding new equipment for the Volunteers in Policing group.

Mr. Roumbos departed at this time.

6. A revised draft of the survey as prepared by Councilor Novak was distributed by Town Council President for review and discussion at a future meeting.
7. The Town Council discussed its possible nominees for appointment to the Select Centennial Commission. It was noted that the Community Events Commission, the Highland Christian School and the Calvary Baptist School remain to make nominees to the centennial commission. The Town Councilors indicated that they would follow up with some persons that may be interested.
8. The Town Council discussed the manner of payment for the Town attorney and the legal counsel serving the various boards and commissions.
9. The Town Council discussed informally the prospect and the ways and means of engaging a grants writer coordinator.
10. The Town Council discussed public safety concerns associated with establishments in the downtown and patron behavior. The discussion included whether or not a special walking detail to be assigned to walk in the areas where the concerns are associated. The discussion included whether or not a police officer should be assigned to walk through the Lincoln Community Center. The discussion included the ways and means of funding any added security at Lincoln Center. The discussion included whether or not some manner of outsourcing the management of the center.

Councilor Kuiper departed at 9:38 o'clock p.m.

11. The Town Council discussed the policy merits of imposing a work rule that would proscribe "conduct unbecoming" a municipal employee on work time or public property.
12. The Town Council discussed the merits of having formal solicitation of requests for qualifications (RFQ) by the several departments more widely than the current purchasing ordinance requires.

There being no further business to come before the Town Council, the regular study session of the Town Council, **of Monday, March 02, 2009**, was adjourned 9:46 o'clock p.m.

Michael W. Griffin, IAMC/MMC/CPFA
Clerk-Treasurer